

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief John R. Batiste



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February 1, 2006

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Washington State Patrol Releases Year End Rollup

Chief John R. Batiste announced today the Washington State Patrol troopers arrested 20,212 DUIs and made over a half million stops for speed violations, in 2005.

Year end statistics show that WSP investigated collisions are up 7% compared to 2004, and total fatalities are up 8% compared to 2004. Although it has not been finalized yet, Fatal Accident Record System (FARS) data is showing that there are approximately 640 traffic related fatalities on Washington roadways. This represents an increase of approximately 11%.

At the end of last year, we saw a rise in speed collisions in our state, and because of that, troopers have been exercising less tolerance towards those speeders in an effort to get drivers to slow down. Through the Governor's Government Management, Accountability and Performance (GMAP) process, the WSP and other stakeholders are working on an ongoing education and enforcement campaign to get drivers to slow down. "We need to change driver behavior regarding to speed," said Chief Batiste.

"Troopers have been working hard in 2005, but as long as there are still deaths on our roadways, we know we still have work to do," Chief Batiste said. "The WSP will continue to work closely with allied agencies and the Washington State Traffic Safety Commission in 2006, focusing on collision causing violations such as speed, DUI and aggressive driving."

Washington State continues to be one of the top states in the nation with a 95% seat belt compliance rate. However, in 2005, there were several collisions where multiple deaths occurred and some other collisions that were so severe they were not survivable.

Chief Batiste said: "It is important to note that in 41% of all fatality collisions the deceased was not wearing a seatbelt. These individuals are a part of the 5% of Washington citizens who are still not wearing their seatbelts and we will continue to find innovative ways to reach these individuals who have not been impacted by our education and enforcement efforts."

In addition Washington State was recognized in 2005 as the 4th safest state in the nation for the safety of youth drivers by a physician-lead traffic safety advocacy group called End Needless Death on our Roadways (END) and the National Safety Council, and was ranked #1 according to a study conducted by the American Transportation Research Institute, as having more traffic enforcement and lower crashes involving commercial motor vehicles, focusing on targeting aggressive drivers.

Overall, we made 56,254 aggressive driving contacts in 2005 compared to 52,242 in 2004, an increase of 8%. Aggressive Driving Apprehension Team (ADAT) troopers, who account for only 6% of the WSP field force personnel, made 25% of all aggressive driving contacts, a testament to the success of this strategy.

Note: The monthly WSP Strategic Advancement Forum (SAF) for the Field Operations Bureau is scheduled for this Friday, February 3, from 8 a.m. to noon in the General Administration Auditorium. During this SAF, all district commanders will be reporting their year end statistics to the WSP executive staff.

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